

VOLUME 12, NUMBER 1, MAY 2015

# **Hellenic Pedagogical Cosmos**

‘FOLOI’

# Hellenic Pedagogical Cosmos

A Periodic Kaleidoscope on Education and Pedagogy in  
Hellas

## Editor

Dr Leonidas C. Bombas

## Contributors

Fourla, Elena  
Koiliari, Venetia  
Koraki Anna  
Kostarelos, Christos  
Papadimitropoulou, Elli  
Pitterou, Efie  
Toliou, Katerina

*Hellenic Pedagogical Cosmos* (HPC) is an informative, rather unusual, periodical on educational and pedagogical issues and developments in contemporary Hellas. It is not an academic review in the traditional sense by which such reviews have become known throughout the international academic community. The format is different, the contents as a whole are presented differently. Notwithstanding this, HPC seeks, primarily, to serve the needs of all those Anglophones whose access to the esoteric educational atmosphere of Greece is limited due to the Greek language barrier. Throughout the contents of the periodical, the non-Greek speaking reader may find a number of highly synoptic presentations of a variety of educational and pedagogical themes from a wide spectrum of 'originators' (e.g. academics, researchers, teachers, parents, students, journalists, politicians, etc) that rarely cross Greek borders via the medium of a 'foreign' language. In that sense, the heterogeneous panorama of the synchronous Hellenic pedagogy analyzed in this 'Cosmos' may always be of both theoretical interest and practical use to all those involved in the field of education.

**Editorial correspondence** should be addressed to: Dr Leonidas C. Bombas ,24 Efthimiou Papa Street, 17342 AgiosDimitrios, Greece.

Tel: 697-4433234

Fax: 210-9927659

e-mail: [bombas@hpcosmos.gr](mailto:bombas@hpcosmos.gr)

[www.hpcosmos.gr](http://www.hpcosmos.gr)

HPC will be published two times a year, in May and November. These two issues constitute one volume.

© 2015 Leonidas C. Bombas

All rights reserved. Any part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means, provided that the original source (HPC) is mentioned.

Athens, Greece: 'Foloi' Publications

ISSN 1790-1049

## The central theme of this issue

### **“Teachers” and “teachers” in the “pot of experience”...**

Although our long tradition has it that the “experienced” teacher (as most probably is the case with virtually all other professions) has by definition the ‘upper hand’ in any type of comparison with his “inexperienced” colleague, the challenge, however, is still there for the interested researcher of synchronous pedagogical and educational issues. The tempting question of juxtaposing and, thereafter, comparing (to the extent that such a theoretical exercise is feasible and has any real meaning) these “two types or broad categories of classroom teachers” in today’s educational settings, presents itself not only as a highly interesting and –somehow-provocative and controversial analytical engagement, but, more than that as a heuristic initiative into the mystic and –as yet- unexplored and “exclusive” world of the teaching profession. Once more, as far as our overall approach via this specific HPC journal is concerned, the fact of the matter that the “experienced” and the “inexperienced” teachers (whatever definition one may adopt for his analysis and whatever concrete characteristics one may attribute to each category of teachers in question) are compared and discussed in the present context by actual classroom teachers, could legitimately claim a clearly discernible additional value for the reader.

Within the framework of this ‘logic of seeing things’, this seeming (and persisting beyond the mere descriptive level of the issue) dichotomy concerning “experienced” and “inexperienced” teachers, should not continue be considered as a “taboo”, implying –almost in an axiomatic fashion- that the answer is more than obvious. Without, of course, neglecting or underestimating an “inherent truth” in this diachronic conviction held by most people, there are innumerable points that require research and deep analysis before we reach conclusive answers in this challenging front. Especially so today in our era of pervasive relativism and globalization at all levels of our personal and collective lives.

In short, then, the “specific thoughts” recorded next by an indicative number of my invaluable colleagues and their ‘experiential comparison’ of “experienced” to the “inexperienced” teacher, may certainly be seen and understood as one of the most reliable and valid depictions of the issue at hand. Their synoptic and eloquent format of presentation comes as an additional merit to this whole aspiring endeavor of ours.

Evidently, without any doubt, you will be the judge of this.

**Dr Leonidas C. Bombas**  
*Athens, May 2015*

## HELLENIC PEDAGOGICAL COSMOS

**Volume 12, Number 1, May 2015**

### ***Editor's Lexis***

*and...*

*Greece does not 'pass' the evaluation test*

*A graduate program of education*

*Dramatic reduction of classroom teachers*

*Children "missing" from Greek classrooms*

*A distinction for the National Metsovian Polytechnic*

*Greek students and racism today*

*On school violence*

*Private lessons flourishing*

*Pedagogy of happiness*

*Kindergarten teachers in special education*

*Non-Greek students in our classrooms*

*The central theme: **Comparing the "experienced" with the "inexperienced" teacher (pros & cons)***

*Looking for private sponsors in education*

*Seven 'thorns' for students and teachers*

*The history of my school*

*Pan-Hellenic teachers' competition*

*The best public library in Greece*

*After school studying*

*From the history of the education system*

*Controversial artwork to be removed from textbook*

*"Training school parents"*

<p><b>The valuable assistance of "NeaEkpaideftiria – G. Malliaras" in realizing this HPC project is greatly appreciated</b></p>
---

THE **POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMME OF "CREATIVE WRITING"** OF THE **UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN MACEDONIA** IN COOPERATION WITH THE **DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES, LIBRARY SCIENCE AND MUSEOLOGY** AS WELL AS THE **REGIONAL DIRECTORATE OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION OF THE IONIAN ISLANDS** ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE ORGANISATION OF THE **2<sup>ND</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CREATIVE WRITING** FROM OCTOBER, 1<sup>ST</sup> TO OCTOBER 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2015, IN CORFU, IONIAN UNIVERSITY.  
THE CONFERENCE IS DEDICATED TO THE WRITER AND ACADEMIC **THANASSIS VALTINOS** AND TO THE POET **TITOS PATRIKIOS**.

## Editor's Lexis

*As virtually all Greeks (and not only) would have expected the leftist party "SYRIZA" won the majority of votes for the Greek parliament in the January 25 general elections. As a result of this electoral outcome, a new coalition government was formed by SYRIZA and the right wing party of ANEL ("Independent Greeks"). The new political leadership at the Ministry of Education (A. Baltas, the minister and T. Kourakis, the alternate minister), has already made its presence felt in the Greek educational arena through a number of concrete changes (reforms?) in our education system. Keeping with the long tradition of the Greek educational "happenings" throughout the years, the present leadership of the Ministry of Education already appears to wish to leave its own "mark" on the system of education -as has always been the case with all previous Ministers and their attempted and/or implemented reforms and...their perennial counter-reforms...*

*In any case, among the initiatives and changes legislated (or in the process of being prepared for legislation) by Mr Baltas and his co-workers, one finds: The abolition of previous legislation concerning the governing of Greek universities and the permanent 'expulsion' of the so-called "eternal" university students; the abolition of the "experimental and model schools"; and the changes (again?) of the system concerning the Pan-Hellenic university entrance examinations. In addition, a number of specific changes have been proposed concerning the curricula of primary and secondary education, as well as changes in the selection/appointment of school head teachers. Expectedly so, according to the Minister's public statements in and outside parliament, all these changes are instituted in the "name of democratic pursuits" and in striving to "improve the education system" for the good of all students and the Greek society at large. Within the same "spirit of correcting respective legislations of the previous government", the Minister of Education also abolished the entire evaluation scheme for primary, secondary and tertiary education, an evaluation scheme being attempted for the very first time in the Greek education system.*

*Once again, given the very fact that this is a new government and a new leadership in the Education Ministry, one has to adhere to a rather stoic stance and, thus, "wait and see". Or, stated otherwise, chronos will tell!...*

**Leonidas C. Bombas**

Comparative Educationalist  
Director of Studies, "Nea Ekpaideftiria" – G. Malliara

Athens, May 2015

## **Anthology of educational/pedagogical issues as presented via the press**

### **Greek universities “aging”**

Virtually all Greek universities are “aging” nowadays due to the reduction in the total number of teaching staff. Pensioned off university professors are continuing to teach university courses due to the lack of needed teaching personnel in many university faculties/departments across Greece –despite the fact that pensioners are not allowed by law to teach at the undergraduate level. And this is so due to the fact that the total number of teaching staff at Greek universities has been decreased by a percentage of 25% over the last five years. It should be noted that this ‘reduction’ does not constitute a quantitative ‘deficit’ (only) but more than that a qualitative ‘deficit’ since every time a teaching post is not ‘replaced’ with a new professor, the teaching subject is ‘lost’ altogether. As a result, all Greek universities are “aging” as the average age of their teaching staff is on the increase. The picture seems to be similar with regard to the administrative personnel of virtually all universities.

### **Seminars from the “Open University of Volos”**

The Open University of the City of Volos (Central Greece) has already established its valuable presence via a series of activities and programs which are attended by a great number of interested individuals. As initially planned (and expected by its founders and the local community at large) this life-long learning educational and training ‘arrangement’ in the Greek periphery is constantly acquiring recognition and strength to continue its developmental course by offering tangible opportunities for further learning and education in the area. Thus, among others, this current academic year the Open University of Volos is offering a number of very interesting seminars for adults, seminars which focus on the following topics/themes: “History of the Arts”; “Certified Seminars of English for Adults”; and “Creative Writing”. As explained in the informative letter published in the press, all seminars are conducted by specialized academics and other experts in related fields and have been designed in such a way as to ‘fit’ and accommodate all interested participants.

### **Teleconference in 164 schools across Greece**

The Directorate against Electronic Crime of the Greek Police organized and carried out a special teleconference involving 164 schools located in different geographical areas of the country. The schools in question were invited to

participate in the teleconference through the system called “meeting.sch.gr” of the Pan-Hellenic School Network. During this teleconference aimed at informing and sensitizing primary and secondary students on the many dangers that they may run into when using ICT in its various ‘formats’, specialized police officers presented audiovisual material and discussed with the participating students all related issues and concerns. Among other issues discussed, particular emphasis was given to the phenomenon of “internet violence” and the “dangers that may be present when using social media”.

#### **Students and their mobile/cell phone**

A more recent development concerning all related ‘procedural details’ with regard to the much publicized and ‘anxiety producing’ tertiary education entrance examinations, should be observed with the particular attention it deserves for those directly involved. Drastic measures and immediate (irrevocable) penalties for students who will be caught with mobile phones, calculators or any other electronic device of transmitting/receiving information during their sitting for the annual Pan-Hellenic higher education entrance examinations. The Greek Upper Administrative Court has decided that the student is immediately penalized (by marking his exam paper with “zero” grade) even in cases that he is caught with such electronic devices outside the examinations classroom (e.g. going to the toilette, etc).

#### **On contemporary Greek Head Teachers“front”**

It seems that the new leadership of the Ministry of Education has decided to change the way that school head teachers are selected –a specific aspects of the Greek education system that has been in the center of heated controversies for years. Nonetheless, as announced by the Minister of Education A. Baltas, from now on the Teacher’s Association of each school will be given the opportunity to vote for the teacher/candidate of their preference who would like to be appointed as the head teacher of their school. As explained, this voting of the school’s teachers will contribute a percentage of about 30% to the total ‘evaluation process’ of every teacher declaring his/her candidacy for the specific job. Needless to say in this respect that the vast majority of teachers appear to agree with this “more democratic” development, while most (if not all) head teachers already in service have started voicing their strong opposition for such an ‘electoral” method, stressing a number of issues and negative consequences which will inevitably emerge in all schools.



### **An Interesting and rather “unusual” seminar**

The teacher responsible for Cultural Themes/Issues of the Regional Directorate of Primary Education in co-operation with the Association for the Promotion of Rhetoric in Education organized an in-service training seminar of an experiential nature entitled: *“The art of rhetoric in the teaching of the Greek language: Cultivating the speech/logos of arguments”*. The organizers have stressed that the use of the art of rhetoric in the teaching of the school subject of language constitutes a very important tool for developing oral speech, active listening and creative thinking in all students. More specifically, rhetoric as a skill aimed at persuading is a highly effective tool/medium for teaching and cultivating the use of sound arguments in the classroom. Through a variety of ‘speech games’, role playing, dialogues of questions & answers students have the opportunity to discover, to produce and assess the arguments that are interchanged during the interpersonal communication, in advertisements, in everyday life relations, in politics.

### **Co-operation between China and Greece in education & culture**

In a very good climate characterized by a series of fruitful discussions and constructive exchange of ideas of mutual interest for both countries, Greece and China, the Greek Minister of Education A. Baltas and the Alternate Minister of Education T. Kourakis met with a Chinese delegation of educational experts headed by the Deputy Minister of Education Li Weihong. The two sides discussed at length the prospects of co-operation in the areas of archaeology, the study of culture and civilization, technology of experimental industry in medicine, and several other topics. “The aim of our visit is to further promote our co-operation in the broader field of education”, said the Chinese Deputy Minister and added that “we want both sides to strengthen the existing dialogue among our citizens in the education sector, placing particular emphasis on systematic exchanges and on the learning of our respective languages. The Greek Minister said that “we welcome this initiative for permanent co-operation between China and Greece” and underlined the fact that such ideas/proposals may definitely contribute towards the deeper understanding of both the Chinese and the Greek civilization/culture.

### **A failing Greek education system**

According to a recent small-scale survey conducted among Greek students living in the area of Northern Greece, it seems that for most Greek students attending school has become an “unbearable burden”. This survey was carried out as part of a joint project and has revealed a number of interesting trends and concerns. More specifically, the overall results recorded the following: Six

out of ten students do not feel happy in school, while they also say that they are not satisfied with the existing curricula/programs of study they have to follow on a daily basis, pointing to the fact that these programs –to a great extent- promote only superficial rote learning (“papagalia”/parroting) Furthermore, an overall climate of dissatisfaction has been recorded through the respective answers of the participants concerning the prospect of their future professional/employment career after their graduation from upper secondary school (Lyceum).

## **New synergies, new promises and new enthusiasm in the horizon**

### **Educational activities “Training School Parents”**

The Foundation of Youth & Life-Long Learning (Ministry of Greek Education) has established since 2004 the so-called “Schools for Training of Parents”. From that year onwards, a number of special activities and related projects have been organized targeted at informing and training parents across Greece.

Nowadays, taking into account the increasing number of incidents of school violence and the widely expressed concern among the educational community at large, it is proposed that 4-hour special meetings with the participation of all teachers and all Associations of School Parents will be organized in all primary schools. These informative training sessions are expected to sensitize all parties on the important issues and characteristics of this phenomenon of contemporary school violence at the elementary schooling level.

A few informative words concerning these “Schools for Training Parents” are also put forward to all primary schools to which this particular circular was addressed on April 2, 2015.

This entire project is co-funded by the European Social Fund & the Greek Government and aims at: Informing and training as many Greek parents as possible by special experts and qualified professionals (Psychologists, Sociologists, etc), so that they may function effectively and perform their highly demanding and complex role with success. It is noted that up to this day, approximately 200,000 have taken part in the program and have been “trained” accordingly.

## **Apnea in the educational galaxy**

### **Poverty and hunger in many state schools around Athens**

According to a recent publication in the Greek daily press, a large number of students attending schools located in the Greek capital are facing serious problems due to their living in conditions of poverty. The different Associations of Concerned Parents along with the entire movement of parents have already -for quite a few years now- underlined this serious problem of our times, demanding that, in the very least, a meal should be available/offered to each one student in need across schools. The official Greek state should bear the full responsibility for such “helping initiatives” while using all existing infrastructures of the respective local municipalities, without sponsors and NGO.

Yet, this extremely sensitive and important issue/problem seems to have been left “in the hands” of different NGOs, interested individuals and...non-state organizations, most of which try to “show their social face” and their philanthropic work through programs and activities that do not address the real problem at hand.

A very vivid and highly illustrative example of the poverty/hunger problem comes from some indicative figures made public by the Ministry of Education: Among 64 public schools located in the comparatively more “vulnerable” neighborhoods of the Municipality of Athens, almost 25% of the families living there have been hit by hunger, whereas approximately 60% of them are experiencing insecurity concerning the availability of daily meals for their families. Furthermore, among these families, it has been observed that one of the two parents does not have any income (salary or pension) whatsoever, while a percentage of 17% of those families had no parental income at all.

Granting that there will be differences from case to case, on the whole, it seems that the overall situation is quite similar in virtually all the other geographical areas of Greece.

<p><b>Amorphous pedagogical enigmas...with school neophytes</b></p>
---

### **After school study**

The Primary Teachers' Association of Messinia (Peloponisos, southern Greece) has organized a specific extra-curricular program of studying called "OUR SCHOOL" aimed at helping interested students with their daily homework. The program is available free of charge to every student in the area and has already attracted approximately 300 students from all primary school grades. A total of 100 volunteers (principally, primary school teachers but also teachers/experts specialized in other school subjects) assist and guide students when necessary with regard to their 'extra needs' on a daily basis. As reported in the press, 73 classes have been operating within this scheme so far, teaching and assisting students in a variety of school subjects and related activities.

Every week the whole program offers about 600 'teaching/student hours'. More specifically, the children attending this free of charge program have the opportunity to receive concrete assistance and further explanations concerning their daily school work as well as to participate in athletic/sports activities, theater, activities teaching human values and foreign languages, crafts, reading books, etc.

It is evident that this specific initiative/program fully developed and implemented by the Teachers' Association of Messinia came into existence as a "very concrete and tangible answer" to the multifaceted needs faced by many Greek families in the middle of the severe economic crisis of the last five years. That is why the program has been very well received and 'embraced' by the parents in the area and the local community at large.

The volunteer work of all those teaching and assisting the students in need has been greatly appreciated, considering the fact that, otherwise, parents would have had to pay extra money to assist their children with their daily school work.

## **From the history of the neo-Hellenic education system: a didactic nostalgia**

### **Greek teachers' Mastery (1834-2010): From the teacher of the national state to the teacher of intercultural and European dimension**

**Time Sectors** In the long course of education of male and female teachers in Greece since the establishment of the Royal Teachers' College in 1834, we distinguish three periods-sectors, using as a criterion the radical changes in the institutional framework: 1st Period 1834-1932: The Period of Teachers' Colleges of Primary Education 2nd Period 1933-1982/4: The Period of Pedagogical Academies 3rd Period 1984-Today: The incorporation of the teachers' education in the Universities Each of the above periods has its own specific characteristics that result from the educational policy exercised at the time. In other words we have to do with conscious ideological-political and national selections.

**First Period: Teachers' Colleges (1834-1932)** The characteristics of this period are summed up to the following: • Dispersion of Schools to provincial towns • Schools of high school level (graduates of Greek schools-boarding schools are accepted) • —Governmental Embrace in: Selection of students. The state defines conditions and criteria for the students' introduction. Students are taught the courses that they are supposed to teach themselves at the Primary School. Planning of curriculums (of professional nature) — writing of books. Selection of the teaching staff. Teacher Education in Modern Era 25 3122 Organization of inner life (rules — regulations- strict organization of inner life at the Institutions). Interpretation: During this period, the Hellenic state considered the teacher as a carrier of the national ideology — modulator of national identity for the establishment of the national state which starts —out of nothing (Dertilis, op.cit.). The behavioristic approach of practicionism dominates in the programs, WHAT (Knowledge) — The teacher to be learns well the Taistic method. Delivery of knowledge takes place.

**Second Period: (1933-1982/84) The Period of Pedagogical Academies** The characteristics of this period (the institutions remain disrupted in the province under the governmental protection) are summed up to the following: • Upgrading of level (selection of students who are graduates of 6/class Senior High School) • Enrichment of curriculums with answers to HOW (psychoeducational courses — practical exercise) • Domination of Ervartian Education • Continuation of domination of practicism and

behaviorism • Reinforcement of the ideological, sociocultural control of the state on the educators (similar to the one of 1929, dictatorships, unstable political landscape, 33 governments in 1920-28 and 25 Ministers of Education) • Racist – ideological conditions of acceptance (height 1.65 for men, 1.58 for women, 2/3 males, 1/3 females, good physical condition, national conviction after the civil war, etc.) Examples of —Governmental Embrace In order to substantiate the basic characteristics of the Teachers' Colleges and the Pedagogical Academies mentioned above, we refer to some examples:

Third Period: 1984/86 - Today The Teachers at Universities Based on the Framework Law concerning Universities, (1268/82) teachers' and preschool teachers' education takes place at Universities. The first pedagogical departments were established in 1984. The characteristics of this period are: • Autonomy and independence analogous to other University Schools (Law 1268/82). Liberation from the pressing governmental control. Teacher Education in Modern Era 27 3122 • Students' selection based on the Pan-Hellenic Examinations' results. • Disadvantages of the Greek Universities • Curriculums: An effort was made to overcome Behaviorism – Practicism through the incorporation of the meditating-critical dimension (answers to WHAT, HOW, WHOM, and WHY). • Emphasis on the intercultural and the European dimension of education. The teachers' and preschool teachers' education at Universities has a life of two and a half decades. The basic goal of the establishment of the Pedagogical Schools that is the acquiring of a scientific identity, that of a scientist-educator or, according to others, of a psycho-educator, has not been achieved as research has proved. It can be assumed only as a guess, although old practices still exist.

However, the landscape has radically changed. The interaction of the future teachers in a university-research place, the introduction of post graduate studies, the participation to European exchanging programs, the entrance of students in pedagogical schools, due to fine professional prospects, with very high grades (similar to the grades of the Polytechnic and the Law School) bode a positive course even though optimism in this case is reduced due to the difficult financial situation (troika, mnimonium). It seems that we face the transition from the teacher of the National State to the teacher of the intercultural and of the European dimension without neglecting the national character of the programs at the current age of globalization.

### **SifisBouzakis**

In P. Anastasiades et al (eds)

*Teacher Education in Modern Era Trends and Issues UNIVERSITY OF CRETE Department of Primary Education / Teachers In Service Training Division "Maria Amariotou" MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, LIFELONG LEARNING AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS Pedagogical Institute March 2011*

## **Looking for a catharsis in the Greek educational tragedy**

### **Greece not up to standard on evaluation tests**

The most recent Report of the European Commission concerning the comparative evaluation of all EU education systems reveals a number of 'shocking' realities as far as the Greek education system is concerned. In all, the Greek education system meets only one of the six medium-term targets set by the EU, targets which are expected to be met by all education systems well up to the year 2020. Extremely disappointing is the respective picture of Greece with regard to the very critical and important indices like the successful transition of university graduates to the labor market, the reduction of the percentage of 15 year old students possessing basic skills and the increase of adults in the so-called life long education.

The Report underlines the very serious problems characterizing the Greek education system concerning both the quality and the effectiveness of the system, while, at the same time, it asks the Greek government to implement specific policies/measures putting particular emphasis on carrying out the evaluation process of the system as a whole.

Among others, the specific recommendations made include the following:

- = The modernization of primary and secondary education with the aim of strengthening the quality of the services provided and of reducing the high percentage of student failure;
- = The implementation of the evaluation system for all primary and secondary teachers and the increase of economic and organizational autonomy of all school units in Greece;
- = The concerted efforts to save 'operational money' in light of the relative low state funding of schools, by adopting specific measures and practices such as a "more streamlined functioning" of school units, thus opening a 'window' to merging and/or closing down a number of schools, by increasing the number of students per class and the reduction of the operational costs of all schools;
- = The promotion of the attractiveness of vocational education, the respective percentage of which in the case of Greece is only 33.1% compared to the corresponding average of 50.4% for Europe as a whole, and the connection of vocational education/training to the labor market;
- = The adjustment and the lining up of the Greek tertiary education with the needs/priorities of the Greek economy aimed at reducing the percentage of unemployed graduates.



Finally, this very interesting and rather alarming comparative Report made public by the European Commission provides an overall profile of virtually all main parameters of the Greek education system. By meticulously recording and presenting illustrative figures and percentages for every single aspect of the system from pre-schooling to graduate studies and life-long learning, the reader may acquire a very vivid and extremely useful picture of the Greek education system as a whole which, in turn, may very well and quite effectively be used for both theoretical and –principally/hopefully-practical/policy making/implementing initiatives and programs.

Once more, it remains to be seen if, what and when the official Greek state is prepared to act accordingly –taking always, of course, into serious account and careful consideration the particular characteristics, the priorities and the resources of the country available. Needless to say at this point that the severe economic crisis permeating the entire Greek social fabric for almost five years now, could not and should not go ‘unnoticed’ in this respect.

## Polychromatic symbols in the pedagogical marathon

### A graduate program in Education

The Department of Pre-School Education and Educational Planning (Faculty of Education, University of the Aegean) has been organizing since the academic year 2004-2005 a Program of Graduate Studies entitled ***“Models of Planning and Development of Educational Units”***, upon the successful completion of which a ***“Graduate Diploma of Specialization”*** is awarded. The duration of this Program is three academic terms of full-time attendance. During the last academic term all attendants of the Program are obliged to prepare and submit their theoretical or research thesis.

As announced by the University authorities through a recent circular, the number of new entrants for the coming academic year 2015-16, is not expected to exceed forty (40) students.

It is noted that during the first two semesters of the Program (10 individual courses) attendance is compulsory, while the languages of teaching are both Greek and English. The courses are organized in the form of ‘modules’ and the students are asked to attend some of the courses during several weekends as well.

Indicatively, some the courses comprising the ‘corpus’ of the Program, are the following:

Governing Educational Units; Development of Educational Units; Research Methodology; Information & Communication Technology; Evaluation of Educational Units; Management of Educational Units; Educational Planning; Philosophy of Education & professional Ethics.

## **Syndromes of lethargy and apocalypses of our schooling in Greece today**

### **Children “missing” from Greek classrooms**

The most recent figures released by the Ministry of Education concerning the phenomenon of ‘missing children from classrooms’ in Greece as of today may, and rightly so, be characterized worrisome and alarming. In all, more than a total number of 16,000 children have ‘abandoned’ Greek primary and secondary education during the last four years (the so-called years of the ‘memorandums’ and the severe economic crisis in Greece), a development which, undoubtedly, carries all the negative consequences that a very serious social problem entails.

Attempting a tentative analysis of this ‘schooling related’ phenomenon of today’s Greece, one may point to: a) the increasing number of Greek families emigrating to other European ( and/or trans-Atlantic) countries; b) the changing of priorities on behalf of many Greeks in their continuous efforts to cope with and survive in the midst of this very bad economic climate of the country; and c) the emerging needs for ‘extra hands/help’ on behalf of a sizeable number of families involved in agriculture and in cattle breeding all over the Greek periphery.

According to the Ministry of Education statistics, during the school year 2010-11 the number of children that ‘abandoned’ Greek classrooms was 3,417, whereas the corresponding figure for the next school year was 3,646 children. During the school year 2012-13 this number reached 4,860 children ‘abandoning’ Greek classrooms and the school year 2013-14 recorded a total loss of 4,502 school children.

The ‘luckiest’ category of this most recent trend characterizing the Greek education system concerns families who emigrated looking for a better and more prosperous life abroad. Germany, the U.K, and Australia appear to be the most preferred destinations in this respect.

However, one must underline the fact that a substantial segment of this ‘classroom abandonment’ of the last four years concerns children of migrant (non-Greek) parentage and Roma children, the vast majority of whom never return to formal schooling. In many occasions individual teachers and their Federations have voiced publicly their great concern over these negative and highly worrisome developments across state schools in Greece, but -so far- no specific measures seem to have been taken on the part of the Ministry of Education.

## Exodus

### **Dramatic reduction of teachers employed in state schools**

According to Themis Kotsifakis (President of the Federation of Greek Secondary Education Teachers, OLME) the total number of secondary teachers employed in state schools has been decreased by a percentage of 27% over the past four years, a period, that is, during which Greece has been under the so-called “memorandum era” due to the severe economic crisis. More specifically, during the last two years a total number of 15,000 teaching posts have been ‘deleted’ for the Greek secondary education sector, whereas during the same two-year period only 92 new teaching appointments have been registered across the country. In short, according to Kotsifakis the entire picture is far worse than one can imagine.

Commenting on the widely discussed ‘myth’ concerning the overall workload of Greek teachers, a ‘myth’ that quite often is reproduced by most of the Greek media, the President of OLME stressed the fact that Greek teachers work more than the corresponding European average. In fact, he added that the Greek teacher not only has a comparatively heavier workload but –on the top of that- his annual salary is considerably lower when compared to his other European colleagues (on average).

“The ultimate goal of all proposed reforms in the Greek educational field is to introduce the private sector of economy into the state schools. The official state will no more finance public education as such. Instead, it will give to each parent a voucher so that the parent may choose a school (public or private) for his children and when the money available come to an end, the parent will have to pay from his own pocket”, Kotsifakis has claimed.

Nonetheless, in the midst of this long-lasting economic crisis permeating the entire socio-economic and political fabric of today’s Greece, no one is in a position to say what the future holds for the Greek education system as a whole. The new Greek government of SYRIZA with all its promises and high hopes ‘in the air’, undoubtedly, will have to deal with and manage all these accumulated problems and drawbacks in the education sector -and not only- the soonest possible. Once, again, Chronos will tell...

## **Oxymora schemata in the Greek education mosaic**

### **Greek students and racism today**

Within the framework of the Annual Program (2013) of the European Fund for the Integration of Citizens from Third Countries (Greek Ministry of Internal Affairs & Administrative Reconstruction), Associate Professor George Nikolaou (University of Ioannina) has been appointed as the Scientific Coordinator for the implementation of the special project entitled “Sensitization of students concerning themes/aspects of racism”.

This particular project aims at:

- = Sensitizing students regarding the phenomena of racism, xenophobia and discrimination;
- = Fighting against all negative stereotypes, prejudices and attitudes vis-à-vis the ‘different other’;
- = Strengthening the mutual acceptance of all native and alien students and promoting their integration as a two-way process among all immigrants and the host society;
- = Learning how to deal/manage through rational arguments, attitudes and action all these phenomena within the social fabric at large.

Based on the above objectives, the project will be implemented through experiential pedagogical actions in selected schools -10 primary and another 10 secondary schools located in large urban centers and which have a relatively high number of students coming from Third Countries (outside the EU). Such actions may be based on different forms of artistic expression, children’s play, rhetoric and the development of dialogue/arguments, while at the same time assisting the development of empathy and the training of feelings among the students.

It is noted that all these concrete actions will be implemented through non-traditional methods of communication –especially through intercultural communication- which are considered to be attractive and may readily contribute towards improving the overall school climate.

## **Monolithic logic in the framework of an austerity chaos**

### **Greek university professors and their salaries**

Professor Ch. Fidas (Aristoteleio University of Thessaloniki) has conducted a survey concerning the annual salaries of all Greek university teaching staff and compared these salaries to the corresponding figures of the other European countries. Although they findings came as no surprise to anyone familiar with the overall situation in Greece –especially so during the last 4-5 years, the years of the severe economic crisis in Greece- Fidas’ findings present their own interest (and concern?).

Thus, according to the respective comparative data collected across Europe, Greek university professors ‘occupy’ one of the lowest positions of the list registering university professors salaries in Europe. However, having said that about Greek professors, one should note that university professors in Bulgaria, Romania and Lithuania are at the very bottom of the European-wide salary list.

After all the latest salary cuts imposed by the successive Greek governments of the last 5 years across the public sector, university teaching staff have suffered a dramatic decrease in their annual income and their monthly salary is slightly higher than the salary of a Greek secondary education teacher. As expected, time and again and in all possible tones, university professors have tried to publicize their deep concern and objections to this negative development, but -as of today- nothing seems to have changed in this respect. An additional comment on this front. When comparing university professors’ salaries on a world-wide scale, Greece lags significantly behind among most of the countries of the so-called western world.

## **Pragmatism in the abyss of educational un-orthodoxy**

### **Kindergarten teachers with graduate studies In “Special Education”**

Of the total number of Greek kindergarten teachers 712 have been considered eligible for appointment as teachers of Special Education. Of those 712 teachers only 28 are graduates of the Department of Special Education (University of Thessaly), whereas 683 are graduates from the different University Departments of Pre-School Education across Greece. A noticeable number of those kindergarten teachers have spent a significant amount of money in order to qualify for employment in Special Education classes. Indicative of this trend is the fact that 445 of those teachers have attended a series of Special Education seminars with a personal cost for each teacher of approximately 2000 euro. The total number of kindergarten teachers with graduate studies in the field of Special Education is 254, while only 2 teachers have a doctorate degree.

Comparing these figures with the corresponding numbers of the last school year, one may easily point to a significant increase in the number of Special Education kindergarten teachers having completed graduate studies, an additional qualification that obviously gives them a clear advantage in securing full-time employment in state schools. Indicative of this trend is the fact that this increase reached the percentage of 108% within the period of just one year. From the total number of 122 Special Education kindergarten teachers with graduate studies last year, we have today more than double this number in the same category (254).

No doubt, this particular development -in itself- concerning additional formal qualifications as far as Greek kindergarten teachers are concerned -and more so in the middle of the severe economic crisis across the Greek society at large- should be seen as a highly positive parameter of the teaching profession in contemporary Hellas. Among other things, the entire field and the corresponding actual school policies/practices related to Special Education in Greece, as such, have a rather long way to go before one may claim that the desired level of satisfactory ‘management’ of this very important issue has been reached.

## Amalgamation

### Looking for private sponsors

It seems that virtually all tertiary education institutions in Greece today are experiencing genuine economic difficulties and problems, mainly, due to substantial cutbacks imposed by the Greek government concerning the annual state funding of that particular sector of the Greek education system. As a result, the respective governing/administrative authorities of the educational institutions concerned have turned to the 'free market' in search of extra money and private sponsors in order to balance out the 'deficit' in their overall day-to-day operational budget.

It should be noted that, traditionally, most Greek tertiary education institutions have experienced 'money problems' for a variety of reasons, but the situation today appears to be far more serious and acute. On the other hand, it is well-known that the 'idea' and only the idea of looking (begging?) for funds in the private sector and in private business is a development that can hardly be 'digested' by both the 'universitarians' themselves as an academic body and by a considerably large segment of the Greek society as well.

According to a number of recent statements made public through the daily press, the sum of state funding aimed at tertiary education has been reduced by approximately 70% in several cases. On top of that, the teaching posts of the staff that retire are not filled with new faculty members, while the same is true with regard to the administrative personnel employed in the institutions. Thus, among all other possible sources for funding the operation of the tertiary education institutions concerned, the best way to secure some income from the various buildings that these institutions own, has already been set as a priority for immediate action. On the other hand, it seems that, so far, seven concrete proposals by corresponding private sponsors are under serious examination in this context.



## **Ephemeral hedonistic hydration in the morphology of the system**

### **More and more Greeks are learning German**

The most recent data concerning the learning of foreign languages across the European Union provided by Eurostat, appear to present a number of quite interesting and -to some extent- instructive developments. In the case of Greece, in particular, the respective figures point to a specific direction with regard to the 'increasing presence' of the German language among youngsters. Thus, between the years 2005 and 2012 the percentage of Greek secondary students opting to learn German increased by 8% (from 36% in 2005 to 44% in 2012), a trend that seems to be continuing well up to the present.

On the contrary, during the same time period, the corresponding figures of Greek students learning French has been on the decrease. From a percentage of 59% in 2005 we have a percentage of 49% in the school year 2012-13, a development that, no doubt, is far from encouraging for the presence of the French language in contemporary Greece.

As it is known (and expected!) the learning of English among the vast majority of Greek students continues to 'reign' in the foreign language learning sector. Furthermore, it is reminded in this context that English, French and German continue to be the most widely taught foreign languages across the secondary education sector in all of the European Union membership. As a matter of fact, the learning of English among the EU member states has reached the noticeably high percentage of 97.1% of all secondary students. The learning of French stands at 34.1%, the learning of German at 22.1% and the learning of Spanish at 12.2%.

It should be noted that the learning of Spanish has registered an average increase from 7.4% in 2005 up to 12.2% in 2012.

## **Cultural pluralism in our xenophobic cosmos: contemporary philanthropists and stoics... in action**

### **Non-Greek origin students in our classrooms**

“A number of my students were looking at me confused. For a moment I thought that I was not explaining something adequately. Thus, I tried to make the lesson more ‘vivid’ and more interesting. But to no avail... It took me some extra time to realize that these specific students in my class did not understand anything. The reasons? They had only a very limited knowledge of the Greek language”.

The above narration of a Chemistry teacher of grade A of a lower high school in the AgiosloannisRenti district (a neighboring municipality of Athens) is highly revealing of the great difficulties faced by the non-Greek origin students, whereas a similar situation of daily school difficulties are present in the case of the Greek repatriate students.

Another primary education teacher employed in the area of Kypseli - Athens center -adds in this context that: “There are children in our primary school (grade A or grade B) who cannot even say in Greek that they want to use the toilet”.

As estimated by the Ministry of Education, one in ten students across all Greek state schools is of non-Greek (or ‘alien’) origin. Yet, the fact should be noted that over the past 4-5 years, due to the well-known economic crisis, a sizeable number of non-Greek families are leaving Greece, either to return to their original counties or to move to other countries of Western and Northern Europe.

When assessing their educational achievement in primary and secondary education, most Greek teachers seem to agree that: “The children who have been born in Greece, irrespective of their parents’ ethnic origin, are comparatively better able to cope with the daily school demands than their classmates who have been in Greece for a short time”. Interestingly, as the teachers themselves note with emphasis: “The children who come from the different countries of Eastern Europe tend to come from families who demonstrate an increased interest in their children’s education and knowledge in general and they pay particular attention/care for their children. The children, however, who come from Asia usually face additional difficulties in Greek schools since the way their own language is written differs substantially when compared to Greek”.

## **Agonies and ecstasies within the educational liturgy**

### **On school violence/ bullying**

The theme or the topic of school violence/school bullying seems to have become 'the order of the day' among a substantial number of interested 'circles' in today's Greece. Echoing, perhaps, the Europe-wide 'awakening' on this issue, a growing number of Greek teachers and –principally- Greek parents have already started to formulate a special agenda full of public discussions and multifaceted concerns about the so-called bullying in Greek schools. The synoptic article that follows may be seen as a small indicative 'sample' in this respect.

The Ministry of Education (and Culture, Religion & Sports) having adopted the 6<sup>th</sup> of March of every year as the "Pan-Hellenic Day against violence in Schools", attempts to sensitize and awaken all protagonists and all participants in the Greek daily education arena concerning the serious 'side-effects' of school bullying across the country. In this context, along with and in addition to several other informative official circulars to public and private schools, the Minister of Education sent a special letter to all primary and secondary schools underlining the vital importance of implementing a series of specific actions and school activities against school violence –principally, at a preventive level.

More specifically, as explained in this year's informative circular dated March 4, 2015, this "Day Against Violence in Schools" presents itself as a very good opportunity for students, teachers and parents of all schools to exchange thoughts, ideas and experiences while at the same time they may be informed and may, in turn, propose ways of preventing and dealing with school violence and school bullying. Furthermore, all Regional Directors of Education in collaboration with the teachers assigned to developing actions aimed at preventing such behaviors in schools, are called upon to provide guidance and assistance to individual schools and individual teachers, so that the respective activities/programs are both well-organized/implemented and effective across all schools.

On the "Day Against School Violence" all schools are called upon to devote two (or more, depending on the particular circumstances in each case) teaching hours in presenting and discussing books on this issue, showing videos/films, organizing interactive discussions and experiential seminars, etc.

## **Chronic searching for classroom catalysts in the Hellenic pedagogical arena**

### **Pan-hellenic teacher's Competition**

The British Council in Greece within the framework of the program called "Life Skills" is organizing for the very first time the Pan-Hellenic Competition for Teachers with its central theme the development of life skills of their students with the use of the new technologies. This particular initiative has the direct support of the program "Collaborators in Learning" of Microsoft Hellas.

Why life skills? Life skills is a term which describes a series of specific skills that are acquired through the teaching/learning process or through experience for everyone and these skills help individuals or groups of people to effectively manage daily issues and problems. Creativity, critical thinking, the ability to solve problems and make decisions, communication and co-operation, the status of citizenship, the relationship of daily life with the professional career, personal and social responsibility all these are necessary characteristics for succeeding in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The most effective way of learning about life skills in the education sector is the active, critical, interactive, co-operative and participatory teaching/learning method for all schools and for all children.

Thus, in this Pan-Hellenic Competition all primary and secondary teachers (public and private schools) are eligible to participate by submitting a detailed description of their "activity", an activity that they and their students have implemented in their classroom.

Criteria for evaluating the 'activities' submitted: a) proposed methodology for developing life skills; b) use of technology; c) student involvement aiming at developing life skills; d) cross-subject/thematic approach, and, e) concrete outcomes in the learning process.

The five best "activities" submitted will be receiving 'technologically related' prizes (tablet, mobile phone, software, etc).

More so, of all respective submissions, the specific educational "activity" which will attract/collect the highest number of "likes" will be awarded the "Educators Choice" prize.

## **Apotheosis of the daily school praxis**

### **Seven “thorns” for students and teachers**

Seven “thorns” appear to puzzle and discomfit the vast majority of students and teachers in the Greek primary education system as this system of state run schools continues to function well up to the present. In short, the quantity (large volume) of the officially prescribed teaching material/school subjects, the difficulty in understanding the specific content of the school texts, the overloading of students with homework and the inadequate in-service training of the Greek teachers as a whole constitute the ‘corpus’ of those seven “thorns” characterizing the Greek primary education sector. The total ‘amount’ of school homework in most school subjects taught as far as primary schooling is concerned, in particular, is noticeably more than it should be by any standard.

The school subjects of Mathematics (grade five), History (grade six) and Mathematics (grade two) seem to pose the most difficulties in terms of not only the actual volume/quantity required to be taught daily in the respective classrooms but also in the clarity of the teaching material as well.

The fore-mentioned points have been recently presented by the team of researchers of the Institute of Educational Policy (Greek Ministry of Education) in outlining the overall empirical findings of an extensive survey conducted among 322 Primary Education School Councilors whose particular specialization represented all school subjects taught.

Difficult concepts in a series of school subjects in all primary education grades, school subjects and teaching material in which the requirements/demands increase excessively and disproportionally in relation to each previous grade are two of the most common grievances voiced concerning Greek primary schools.

On the other hand, the survey and the participants’ responses on the respective questions have pointed out that the school subjects of Religion, Social & Political Education and Social Studies/Environment seem to present the comparatively fewer problems and difficulties for both the students and the teachers.

## **Nostalgia through the austerity chaos**

### **“The history of my school”**

The National Center for Preserving School Material in co-operation with the Educational Television Unit of the Greek Ministry of education are organizing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Student Competition entitled “The history of my school”.

More specifically, as explained in an informative letter sent to all public and private schools, the method of recording and presentation of the history of each particular school may include: a) the architecture of the building housing the school; b) the different ‘usages’ of the building throughout the years; c) the history of the school and the specific social framework within which the school operates; d) the connection of the school with important historical events/developments; e) the physical and the constructed space and the changes over time; f) the former students of the school –famous or not; g) comparing the functioning of the school in previous years and today. All these fore-mentioned topics may constitute themes/issues of a number of small-scale research activities (e.g. bibliographic research, visits, interviews, etc) by the children concerned in each case in their free time, while ‘processing’ and ‘synthesizing all this collected information in their respective classrooms.

The stated goal of this completion is that all primary and secondary students get to know the history of their own school, to bring to the forefront the local history, to actively participate in the learning process, to be involved in the making of this project in a constructive way, to learn to use sources (written and oral) and to approach these sources critically and constructively.

All projects submitted will be judged by a selected team of teachers, special experts and artist. The names of all ‘winners’ in this competition will be announced in an especially organized ceremony, where the children will receive separate awards for pre-school, primary and secondary schools.

## **Analysing theantilogos as the synonym of asphyxiation**

### **Private lessons (still) flourishing**

Despite the deep economic recession that Greece is suffering from, many Greek families provide their children with extra lessons alongside the State education. Yet, irrespective of the fact that many and controversial/heated discussions have been taking place all over Greece concerning this rather massive phenomenon of extra lessons or private tutorials (Frontistiria/Idiaitera), and the 'problem' has for long been there, one should not ignore or underestimate the existing (analogous) situation in many other countries. Usually called 'shadow education' (or otherwise, for that matter), this practice of extra lessons appears to be today almost a universal 'parental choice or practice' for their children.

No doubt, this rather widely cherished practice along different societal contexts may very well taken –among others- as indirect (direct?) clear indication of the overall effectiveness of the respective systems of education. Or, at least, this seems to be the 'picture' that all parents in question hold for the education system of their country. And this far from encouraging/promising phenomenon for state education as a whole. Nevertheless, let us come back to our Greek case in point by presenting a number of relevant figures which, of course, tell the story in an eloquent way.

It is estimated that around 65 percent of low-income Greek families with less than 500 euros per month and who live in conditions of poverty, send their children to extra lessons.

The survey was carried out by PALMOS ANALYSIS on behalf of the owners of Greek supplementary educational establishments (Frontistiria).

The findings were astonishing, although not unexpected on the basis of the traditional trends among the Greek families:

- Four out of five high school students (80 percent) attend extra lessons.
- An estimated 47 percent of families cannot afford extra lessons.
- One in three students who during senior high school do not attend extra lessons, will not participate in the Panhellenic national examinations, usually from lower social classes.

## Chronic searching for classroom catalysts in the Hellenic pedagogical arena

*(The main points/thesis of a published research on contemporary Greek educational issues, as this work has been presented by the author herself)*

### **Raising bilingual awareness in Greek primary schools**

Bilingual phenomena in the Greek social and school settings have started to be noticed and studied mainly over the last decade, as Greece has changed from being a country of exporting migrants to being a country of receiving immigrants from many parts of the world. Politicians, academics and teachers have proposed and implemented various educational measures in order to accommodate the needs of children and adults from non-Greek speaking backgrounds with various levels of success. The Greek educational system, as any other in similar circumstances, is being challenged, as the multilingual school context requires the rethinking and redefining of everyday school practices. Research in language contact and bilingualism in Greece concerns both language and education researchers. Evidence to this provides the work of Greek researchers such as Σκούρτου (Skourtou) (1997, 2002) Δαμανάκης (Damanakis) (2002), Γκότοβος (Gotovos) (2002), Τσιάκαλος (2000) (Tsiakalos) and Γκόβαρης (Govaris) (2001), who come from either linguistic or pedagogical research backgrounds. Moreover, the variety of definitions, proposed by experts in the field of language contact, point to the fact that bilingualism is a complex phenomenon that includes many types, such as societal or individual, child or adult, elite or folk, balanced or not, additive or subtractive and so on (Baker, 2000). Although for this paper, we do not need to expand on all the proposed types, definitions and parameters of bilingualism, it is important to keep in mind the complexities involved as we tend to ignore them in our approach and understanding of our bilingual students in the Greek educational context, who are often treated as a homogeneous and static group.

In an attempt to assist primary school teachers in their efforts to deal with the co-existence of non-native and native speakers of Greek in their classes, a research team from the Department of Primary School Education of the University of Thessaly, under the supervision of the author, embarked on the project “Making the best of school multilingualism through the teaching of language, literature and history”, whose structure and main findings in relation to language are presented in the first part of this paper. The findings of our research led to the proposal of several school activities, the most important of whom are “The bilingual portrait” and a children’s book on



bilingualism, titled “My first book on bilingualism”. The aims and content of both these initiatives are presented in the second part of this paper. Through the use of the proposed activities, we intend to help raise “bilingual awareness” for all parties involved. The notion of “bilingual awareness” will be also discussed in the second part of the paper.

Our small-scale research in Greek primary schools has documented a lack of teachers’ awareness of issues related to bilingualism as well as to the bilingual students’ social and educational needs. Moreover, it has become apparent to us that teachers and policy makers do not take the time to look into the individual realities of bilingual children and develop educational practices that encourage intercultural exchange between monolingual and bilingual students. On the other hand, we are convinced that although bilingualism is a relatively new phenomenon in the Greek society and school, it has advantages for all students, teachers, parents and communities, which are yet to be discovered. The acknowledgement of the social, cultural, communicative and ideological parameters of bilingualism that extend beyond individuals to the school and society that bilinguals contribute to create has been described and termed as “bilingual awareness”. In order to help educators become more bilingually aware themselves, as well as enable them to encourage their students to benefit from their own or their schoolmates’ bilingual realities, within the context of the multicultural Greek school setting, we proposed two practices in this direction. “The bilingual portrait” constitutes an attempt for students and teachers to become familiar with the views, ideas, realities and linguistic behaviour of bilingual children, some of which may or may not differ from those of monolinguals, thus encouraging both parties involved to reach a higher appreciation of the complexities and uniqueness of each bilingual student. Once the acquisition of bilingual awareness becomes a priority for teachers, we are certain that the manner in which these activities will be adapted to suit the needs of every class will yield the best social and educational benefits possible. We believe that, as Tollefson (1991) states, it is impossible to adopt a neutral or objective attitude towards linguistic heterogeneity and bilingualism, since the linguistic policy that we opt for shapes, one way or another, the world in which we choose to live. On a macro-social level, we are convinced that raising the bilingual awareness of teachers, bilingual and monolingual students, parents and communities will help promote a positive broader ideology, both educationally and socially, that will help lead our modern multicultural societies to the recognition that linguistic pluralism is a unique asset, “a gift that does not cost any money but has great value”.

**RoulaTsokalidou**

## The central theme of this issue

### **“Teachers” and “teachers” in the “pot of experience”...**

*Although our long tradition has it that the “experienced” teacher (as most probably is the case with virtually all other professions) has by definition the ‘upper hand’ in any type of comparison with his “inexperienced” colleague, the challenge, however, is still there for the interested researcher of synchronous pedagogical and educational issues. The tempting question of juxtaposing and, thereafter, comparing (to the extent that such a theoretical exercise is feasible and has any real meaning) these “two types or broad categories of classroom teachers” in today’s educational settings, presents itself not only as a highly interesting and –somehow- provocative and controversial analytical engagement, but, more than that as a heuristic initiative into the mystic and –as yet- unexplored and “exclusive” world of the teaching profession. Once more, as far as our overall approach via this specific HPC journal is concerned, the fact of the matter that the “experienced” and the “inexperienced” teachers (whatever definition one may adopt for his analysis and whatever concrete characteristics one may attribute to each category of teachers in question) are compared and discussed in the present context by actual classroom teachers, could legitimately claim a clearly discernible additional value for the reader.*

*Within the framework of this ‘logic of seeing things’, this seeming (and persisting beyond the mere descriptive level of the issue) dichotomy concerning “experienced” and “inexperienced” teachers, should not continue be considered as a “taboo”, implying –almost in an axiomatic fashion- that the answer is more than obvious. Without, of course, neglecting or underestimating an “inherent truth” in this diachronic conviction held by most people, there are innumerable points that require research and deep analysis before we reach conclusive answers in this challenging front. Especially so today in our era of pervasive relativism and globalization at all levels of our personal and collective lives.*

*In short, then, the “specific thoughts” recorded next by an indicative number of my invaluable colleagues and their ‘experiential comparison’ of “experienced” to the “inexperienced” teacher, may certainly be seen and understood as one of the most reliable and valid depictions of the issue at hand. Their synoptic and eloquent format of presentation comes as an additional merit to this whole aspiring endeavor of ours.*

*Evidently, without any doubt, you will be the judge of this.*

**L.C.B.**

## **Experienced and inexperienced teachers: A quest in common**

The dictionary definition of 'experienced' states that this individual has experience; experience which equates with practical knowledge. This characteristic alone lends the said individual superiority over the 'inexperienced' one. Certainly, until the contrary can be proven, this is true not only in the field of education, but in all professions.

In our profession, the 'experienced' teacher holds many advantages which may, however, prove to be his/her Achilles heel in certain situations, and may thus turn into disadvantages. On the other hand, the disadvantages of the 'inexperienced' teacher may become the driving force behind his/her constant improvement, and thus, in time, become advantages.

Undoubtedly, the teacher who has many years of experience behind him/her is armed with attributes which render him/her secure and confident in his/her position, and so 'superior' in the classroom. An experienced teacher may plan a lesson based on his/her teaching objective, which he/she is able to perceive immediately. He/she thus decides on the focal point of the lesson without having to concern him/herself excessively with how to involve his/her students. The result is a readily attained lesson plan with a beginning, middle and end, while the teacher manages to easily link previous knowledge to the new, and, more significantly, to consolidate and link the lesson to future learning and to create correlations with other cognitive objectives.

It may be said that, armed with a strong lesson plan, the experienced teacher establishes his/her presence in the classroom. He/she clearly articulates his/her expectations concerning the work and the behavior of the students, gives clear instructions, finds the perfect balance between strict and friendly interaction with the students, strengthens the self-esteem of the children and is constantly vigilant. Furthermore, he/she is consistent, while offering choices to his/her students, and above all, demonstrates trust in them.

With the appropriate conduct and with very effective class management the experienced teacher arrives at teaching and learning. He/she avoids hyperbole in his/her speech, manages time effectively, creates such a climate in his/her classroom so that the students are not afraid of posing questions (a difficult point, but for me an especially crucial one), he/she decides on which students to direct the main focus of his/her attention, and in general helps his/her students to achieve their learning objectives.

A shrewd approach to teaching and learning leads one smoothly and cleverly to evaluation; not only to the evaluation of the teacher, but also to that of the students. It identifies the areas in which the teacher presented weaknesses, it leads to an easy interpretation of the results; it assists in the analysis and

diagnosis of the performance of the children. Furthermore, it provides feedback and 'food' for later.

These few points, among many others, provide 'fuel' to an experienced teacher, but at the same time they are a great disadvantage, if the teacher considers that success is achievable only through the presence of these attributes. Over-confidence leads us down different 'roads', if we, as teachers, do not involve ourselves intimately with our small friends. It pits us against the children, and that is the most detrimental situation of all.

This fact is especially significant in our day, when empiricism alone does not suffice, unless it is good empiricism.

Our students are already citizens of the global village. It should be accepted by all teachers that our youngsters must acquire a broader ability to evaluate and a more flexible thought pattern, must have a stronger emotional and mental fortification and moral values that will become their 'protective armor' in an environment without borders. Our schools must produce students who will become the citizens of tomorrow, capable of correctly managing the multitude of data that they will receive daily; of evaluating and prioritizing their consumer habits. However, they must also themselves be replete in the timeless and immutable values that have always supported our civilization, thus making it better for their generation and for those to come.

This is the point at which we arrive at the advantageous point of the relatively new and inexperienced teacher who is a favorably disposed observer and interpreter of events. It would seem that our role as teachers today presents greater and more difficult demands than the obvious delivery of a methodologically impeccable teaching style. By way of being an essentially spiritual, multi-faceted and inspirational undertaking, which, along with an innate creative ability, teaching also presupposes a soul which is rich, cultured and open to new horizons. It would be different if teaching was restricted to a simple delivery of technological and methodological rules.

However, the obligations under the pressures of today's demands have deepened. Our young students now demand to be taught by a cultivated genius, who is an open and restless spirit as well. The teacher must have studied and evaluated the attitudes of modern-day children; he/she must be aware of the interests, the needs and the obligations of young people. The new teacher, along with being inquisitive, must usually be open to new ideas and experiences.

Thus, with relentless study, constant updating and informing he/she broadens his/her spiritual horizons, and seems to manage to escape the routine which torments other colleagues. This teacher is aware of the fact that it is wrong to teach in the same method he/she him/herself was taught in in days gone by. It is my feeling that he/she tries to go beyond the theory that has been

recorded and saved in books, thus endeavoring to make his/her contribution a rejuvenating and beneficial act of school practice.

Teaching requires soul and personality so that your students will identify with you and emerge richer in knowledge and better as people. That is an absolute prerequisite.

Without doubt, older teachers do have personality, however, they must also have the inclination and the courage to act in class.

On the other hand, the young certainly have the inclination, but it is not always so clear that they are as aware of the difficulties of the profession as they should be. We have all experienced the stage at which new teachers find themselves in. It is an absolute certainty that if you like what you are doing and want to be a conscientious educator, you will find the solution to your challenges no matter what stage of your teaching career you are at.

**ChristosKostarelos**

## **The “experienced” and the “inexperienced” teacher from a personal perspective**

My very first day as a teacher was in an urban, evening school for which there was a societal perception of intellectual inferiority, where I had to deal with students that displayed great psychological vulnerability to failure and other identity threatening, social-environmental cues. My primary objectives the first day were to mainly just live through it. There were so many things that I felt responsible for: I was extremely nervous the day before, I had a feeling of being totally overwhelmed: I had prepared a plan grounded in information from effective models, carefully made the sequence in which I would place my meticulously selected activities in the hope that all this might relieve much of the doubt and anxiety, the feeling of trepidation, uncertainty and panic.

After twenty-two years of teaching, I feel that every moment has presented me with opportunities and challenges- way beyond the pedagogy we were taught. I wish I had known how much each of my students were going to mean to me each year; no matter what type of student they are, they are challenging me to help them in the way they need it, which is not the same for every student.

Personally, I have experienced many great moments while teaching. There were days when I ended so happy and enthusiastic that I knew I had selected the right profession. On the other hand, I had days when the students seemed uninterested, too talkative or everything went wrong.

What I now strongly feel is a kind of intuition, which is hard to define, a flow of uncertain competencies whose existence is undeniable, a tacit or implicit knowledge, a kind of “compressed knowledge”.

How novice teachers become experienced teachers has been one of the main concerns of teacher training.

Aldus Huxley said that experience teaches only the teachable. As human beings we are vulnerable to confusing the unprecedented with the improbable. In our everyday experience, if something has never happened before, we are generally safe in assuming it is not going to happen in the future. Therefore, the differences between experienced and inexperienced teachers might be due to other confounded factors such as general life experience.

Almost daily, I am reminded of the truth in Oppenheimer’s observation: the best way to learn is to teach. Whether the lesson is academic or ethical, there is no other activity that so clarifies one’s thoughts. Through questions, misunderstandings and occasional challenges, students acquaint us with uncertainty and doubt.

Experienced teachers are basically able to see teaching not merely as the teaching of discrete skills, but as all interrelated in a rich, elaborate and coherent manner. Novice teachers, on the other hand, tend to dichotomize different aspects of teaching that are inextricably linked, such as fun and learning, student interest and learning objectives: they are also more constrained by the limitations presented to them by their specific contexts.

A novice teacher is anxious to cover the lesson plan and fit the plan to match the time available; more experienced teachers focus on building on students' difficulties, maintain active student involvement, develop a learning target for the lesson.

Considering a qualitative difference, we should also notice that experienced teachers are able to clearly articulate the principles and criteria for making curricular judgement, and the curricular decisions that they make are mostly conscious decisions. Furthermore, their principles and criteria are based not only on their personal experience, but also on the theoretical input that they are able to interiorize and realize in the teaching act.

An experienced teacher, however, is not simply a teacher who has taught for a long time. To become increasingly more experienced doesn't mean to have any final, foreclosing, definite knowledge, such that further, new experiences become less and less interesting, relevant or pleasurable. In this foreclosing version of "becoming experienced", students' troubles become increasingly annoying and the "experienced teacher" becomes more and more cynical or condescending towards those newly arriving in some territory. This is the old saw about "the expert" and why we find such a notion so troublesome in education. It seems to bespeak impatience and a grim sort of finality.

On the contrary, experience becomes a pedagogical invitation that forms a rich, fertile territory. It is as if our becoming experienced makes us more sensitive, more alert, more ready for the arrival of new questions, concerns, troubles, solutions.

The more experienced we become, the more vivacious and lovely and overwhelming new experiences become. And, moreover, our sojourn of becoming experienced makes the arrival of those who don't know their way around this place even more enjoyable, because new arrivals make possible the enrichment and enlivening of our own experience.

As educators, we are forever susceptible to the arrival of the young, the new, and to the extent that we become no longer thus susceptible, we run the risk of becoming "expert" dispensers who slowly come to exhaustion.

**Effie Pitterou**

### **A teacher's searching through the "teaching experience"**

### **continuum**

What is meant by the term “experienced teacher”, is the teacher who, regardless of his theoretical training/orientation, has the experience of the profession, which, in other words, is a body of pertinent knowledge derived from personal experiences on a practical level. On the other hand, the “inexperienced teacher” who, apart from his typical qualifications, has not experienced the actual teaching praxis to a great extent, might not be able to respond adequately to the demands of the profession. The criteria according to which a teacher’s degree of experience is evaluated are: a) the absolute number of years in service; b) his ability to respond to issues that emerge in the school routine and resolve problems arising among the members of the school community; and c) the degree of his involvement in innovative programmes and actions and his active involvement in education in general.

Within the same line of reasoning, the “inexperienced teacher” is the one who has not been directly involved in the actual daily school practice and, as a result, he might handle routine matters unskillfully. And that lack of professional skills may be observed, for example, not only when teaching one or more school subjects (organization of the material to be taught, methodological approach, evaluation etc.), but also in cases where he has to handle and resolve ‘problematic situations’ which are related to the management of relationships between students, parents, or colleagues within the overall school context. In any attempt, then, to compare the experienced to the inexperienced teacher so that the ‘pros and cons’ are discerned and recorded, it seems that – almost as a rule – the experienced teacher enjoys, in fact, the most advantageous position. No doubt, this is the reason why experienced teachers are mostly “preferred”: a) either by parents who openly and unreservedly express their preference for their children to have and experienced teacher; b) or by the headmasters of schools who recommend and appoint “experienced” teachers to handle a class with all kinds of difficulties.

Nevertheless, quite frequently experience is ‘flatly’ equated with the number of years in service, without taking into consideration the qualitative aspects of that experience. Yet, the timely condensed acquisition of important and ‘exploitable experience’ is not impossible to be present even in the case of a teacher with comparatively fewer years of teaching experience. Frequently, the “inexperienced teacher” in comparison to the “experienced” one, particularly in the case where education constituted a conscious choice of the specific profession, is characterized by enthusiasm, “clear thought”, fresh ideas, and an optimistic outlook on the matters of education. At the same time, it is possible that these “inexperienced” teachers might have additional



knowledge and skills, such as, for example, in mastering foreign languages or in the use of computers, which, in turn, may be of great assistance throughout their teaching professional lives at the school and the actual classroom level. On the other hand the “experienced teacher”, on the basis of his experience is capable to respond skillfully in matters concerning: the organizing/planning of their teaching; the management of the curriculum; the organization of the daily teaching time and the overall organization of the class; the prediction, and therefore the prevention problematic situations; the immediate and efficient handling and resolution of emerging problems. Having said that, however, the “experienced teacher” might show signs of exhaustion due to the repeated teaching process or the educational routine, might not review the repertoire of his ‘means and tools’ of teaching, thus remaining in the security of already tried methodological tools and techniques. Additionally, the personal experiences might stimulate the adoption of a more realistic/down-to-earth outlook to matters, which, however, refrain them from deviating from their established and tried processes. Thus, the “experienced teacher” might (simply) rest on the years of his experience and preclude (or reject) any suggestions for adopting innovative and concrete actions in his school, avoiding any type of participation and/or collaboration proposed within the framework of such initiatives.

It is obvious that the co-existence of “experienced” and “non-experience” teachers in school is a reality. Additionally, it can be said with certainty that any “experienced teacher” has not always been “experienced one”. At some point in time, he has started as an “inexperienced teacher” and, through time and his actual involvement in education, he has constantly and consistently been gaining his “little” or “great” experience. It should be reminded in this context that the “kind” and the particular “quality” of any teacher’s professional experience absolutely depends on his own personality, his overall previous experience, and on his total background environment where he comes from. Nonetheless, education is an especially sensitive aspect (“ingredient”) of today’s society and, therefore, the “inexperienced” or “less experienced” teacher should not leave it merely to chance or to the passage of time alone (exclusively) in order “to be taught” as to how they will be efficient in their teaching profession and their daily work at school. School itself has an important role to play in the education of the “less experienced” from the “more experienced”. The education and the training of new teachers, before they take up a “real school class”, should be institutionalized, but also the teachers’ association at each school should cultivate and appropriate school culture so that cooperation, fellowship, solidarity, and meaningful support in matters that have to do with the school practice are enhanced and continuously consolidated.

**AnnaKoraki**

**Experience cannot be created...it must be lived through!**

A multitude of scholars of ancient Greek will readily testify to the fact that in those days wisdom was equated to experience. Such experience was held by men of advanced age who, as the saying goes, 'acquired their ability to think because they saw and suffered a lot'. In the field of education today the question arises of whether a teacher's experience renders him/her effective at work.

Experience in the sphere of education is charged with a positive meaning. The experienced teacher is one who possesses knowledge and the ability to deal with whatever problems may come up in daily school practice. Being repeatedly challenged with similar situations arms the educator with self-assurance and ease. For example, in the teaching of the algorithm of division in the third grade of elementary school the experienced teacher will be in a position to foresee possible difficulties and the ensuing questions on the part of the students and will be able to organize his/her teaching in such a way so as to deal with these queries adequately.

An educator may be considered experienced based not only on knowledge acquired through his/her formal education, but also through practical knowledge gained from experience in the classroom. Thus, it may be said that this teacher holds a valuable tool which adds a new dimension to his/her teaching. In such a situation, for example, a teacher is better equipped to deal with the various problems that will arise in his/her class. Time has allowed this teacher to form his/her attitude to such situations and to determine which of the strategies used at different times were most appropriate.

However, there are those who dispute all the above. It is their belief that experience may diminish the eagerness and the enthusiasm that existed in the early years of work. The art of teaching no longer presents a challenge as this teacher is no longer interested in aligning his/her teaching methods with new developments. In this instance the wear and tear of time has lead the teacher to a standstill.

At the other extreme is the teacher with a minimum, or even no, experience who may turn this lack into a valuable tool. The need of the new teacher to establish him/herself in the eyes of the students may lead this person to diligently prepare his/her daily lessons, to examine the students' queries in detail and with great interest and to address the needs of his/her students. He/she adapts the teaching method to the students' needs and attempts to create attractive lessons in the eyes of the children, by extension making him/herself more attractive to the students.

Moreover, a new teacher will be more attentive of a difficult situation that may arise as it will most likely be the first time that he is dealing with such a situation. For example, if a new teacher sees a child crying because he/she has

been left out, this teacher is more likely to look for the cause of this situation, to listen to both sides of the argument and, in general, to devote time to his/her students. In contrast, the more experienced teacher will solve the problem in a more cursory fashion without actually examining the deeper concerns of his/her students.

In conclusion, experience alone cannot offer much unless it is accompanied by the desired attitude and inclination for progress and development. Otherwise, it is comparable to the lights at the stern of a ship which shed light only upon the route where the ship has already been.

**Elli Papadimitriou**

## **St. Catherine's British School**

**St. Catherine's** was established in 1956 in the grounds of the British Embassy in Athens. Although originally intended to provide education for children from Britain and the Commonwealth, it now teaches pupils from 54 nationalities. Its internationally acclaimed reputation is gained by achieving high academic standards within a challenging curriculum.

St. Catherine's is a 'not for profit organisation'. It is, however, a private school and is registered at Companies House in the UK (reg. no. 860288). It is also registered as a charity with the UK Charities Commission (Charity No. 313909) and annual returns are regularly filed with both these institutions. The headmaster of the school is also regarded as the school's Chief Executive Officer.

In 2010, following inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), the school was accredited membership of the council of British Independent Schools (COBIS).

**Exploring interesting aspects of the variable "teaching experience" vis-à-vis the daily school praxis**

*"Experience: That most brutal of teachers, but you learn, do you ever learn."*

Clive Staples Lewis

I have been faltering in this risky stage for ten years. My lines are gripping. This is my main concern. To be interesting, modern, entertaining, vivid. My audience is never clapping though. How do I know that my students can follow my pace? How am I supposed to know that my words do not echo as another monotonous teacher monologue? How can I use my experience to make the lesson more appealing to them? Through experience of course. Because experience triggers experience. But inexperience may trigger experience, too. There is definitely an invisible line that separates experience from lack of practical knowledge but this is not what may define the teacher's status or attitude towards their audience.

To my mind, teaching experience can be the cornerstone in shaping teacher's decision making concerning practical issues in classroom such as planning, organising and evaluating. But teaching experience is not the only factor. Teacher's personality, ethical values and morality seem to play a more important role in their overall attitude and stance. The educational background and teaching experience together with the specific skills a teacher may have shape the solid ground where the teacher's character will finally build a unique construction. The interactive and ongoing relationship with students is an original blend made up of all the above ingredients. A further speculation on the factor 'experience' could possibly enlighten some more hidden aspects of the teaching attitude in a very interesting way.

One issue that arises with inexperienced teachers is that they should struggle to find a routine for teaching, planning and assessing, especially during their very first steps. Even though teaching a class may seem to them effortless and intriguing, finding appropriate teaching material, creating activities and trying to find the best ways to explain new concepts to students may be a real burden. Also, how to grade assignments and how much time it may take, especially if they weren't well planned, is another disturbing factor.

Another arising issue for inexperienced teachers is stage fright. Even when they have planned the lesson carefully and they have tried to overcome all possible obstacles while teaching, the discomfort they may feel in front of the class cannot be surpassed. They are nervous; sometimes forget what they have to say or what comes next in a lesson.

Finally, giving explanations in a comprehensible way – for example when they teach English Grammar to EFL students – is a skill that simply needs to be practised.

On the other hand, inexperienced teachers seem to be more enthusiastic and keen on teaching than the experienced ones because they do not feel exhausted or fed up with the ongoing process of teaching. They are fresh, imperishable and they also feel that they have a lot of things to offer. They usually try really hard to be innovative and provide students with up – to – date knowledge. They are not stubborn, they love “trial and error” and they experiment a lot. They apply new methods and they screen the educational process as a way to draw some safe inferences that will help them adopt their own teaching style and identity.

*“The impact of experience is strongest during the first few years of teaching; after that, marginal returns diminish. (Jeniffer King Rice / Calder Urban Institute).*

A number of studies confirm that, on average, brand new teachers are less effective than those with some experience under their belts (Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor 2007a, 2007b; Harris and Sass 2007; Kane, Rockoff, and Staiger 2006; Ladd 2008; Sass 2007). Further studies also show that teachers with 5 years of experience are much more effective than those with more than 20 years of experience (Ladd 2008). Evidence indicates that effectiveness declines after some point, particularly among high school teachers. In fact, it suggests that the most experienced (greater than 25 years) high school mathematics teachers may be less effective than their inexperienced colleagues (Harris and Sass 2007). The question that arises at this point is whether teaching experience really adds to teacher’s effectiveness or not.

Effectiveness, expertise and experience seem to play a crucial role in how teachers relate what they know and think to their behaviour during instruction. As mentioned in McCutcheon, 1980 & Morine – Dersheimer, 1977, experienced teachers plan lessons mentally rather than in writing. This is one the most important differences between experienced and inexperienced teachers. Experience helps teachers to handle every possible teaching material or situation in a smooth and almost magical way. It gives them the opportunity to use all the skills acquired throughout the years even when they teach something brand new or without books, when the classroom is disobedient or when they have to plan a really challenging activity which demands lots of mastery. And when it comes to assessing and grading, most of the times they know exactly which qualities to evaluate in a positive or a negative way. Assessment is a really easy task for experienced teachers because they seem to have kept in mind throughout the years all the criteria that may lead them to the correct evaluation.

When it comes to teaching skills, experienced teachers have a really effective way to transmit knowledge and they usually use plenty of strategies and

methods in order not only to draw students' attention but also to explain everything in a comprehensible way even to those who face difficulties.

Experienced teachers know exactly how to approach students when they need their help, which words to use in order to trigger their sentiments or to raise their awareness. They can cooperate with students' parents more effectively and they can often foresee unpleasant situations, which they basically handle with courtesy that not always comes from good manners but from a deep knowledge of all the demands such a relationship may have.

On the contrary, experienced teachers sometimes feel exhausted with the responsibilities, the feeling that their job is not considered a profession and lack of experience but rather a volunteer type of vocation without growth. Shulman stated that, "Teaching is not a profession. It is a never-ending entry-level vocation, divorced from foundational understandings of training, accountability, and advancement. If we are to enact meaningful reform, we must rescue teaching from its status as vocation and volunteerism, and recast it as a profession of rigor, creativity, and unlimited impact."

Furthermore, experienced teachers usually do not explore new educational trends heartily and they are not interested in experimenting new pedagogical approaches. They persist in their own tried and true techniques and they are reluctant when they have to deviate from them. They are not always familiarised with technology and they mainly use traditional teaching methodologies instead of modern ones. They also feel that school bureaucracy is too difficult to deal with and face new challenges hesitantly.

*"All experience is an arch, to build upon."*

Henry Adams

#### **Bibliography**

<http://www.caldercenter.org/>

Clotfelter, Ch., Ladd, H. & Vigdor, J. (2010) *Teacher Mobility, School Segregation and Pay – Based Policies to level the Playing Field*.

Griffey, D, & Dale Housner, L. (1991) *Differences between Experienced and Inexperienced Teachers' Planning Decisions, Interactions, Student Engagement, and Instructional Climate*.

Harris, D. & Sass, T. (2007) *Teacher Training, Teacher Quality and Student Achievement*.

CALDER Urban Institute

Kane, T., Rockoff, J. & Staiger, D. (2006) *What Does Certification Tell Us About Teacher Effectiveness? Evidence from New York City*.

Miller Power, B. (1996) *Oops: What we learn when our teaching fails*.

Katerina Toliou

### **Comparing the "experienced" with the "inexperienced" teacher: Pros and cons**

The memory of being a new teacher in a large school classroom is still fresh in my mind. A multitude of feelings and thoughts come to my mind but what prevails is excitement. You finally get to do what you have been studying all those years, to apply all this knowledge that you have gained. So, excitement is the driving force and at the same time the core characteristic of a new and thus inexperienced teacher. And it is natural that this feeling is something that students perceive and, from their part, share with their teacher. As a driving force, excitement urges the new teacher to build lesson plans that are fun and interesting to the students. What is more, the new teacher may lack experience but is armed with fresh ideas and is willing to experiment by using different kinds of teaching strategies and materials. This is one of the most powerful weapons that the novice teacher has. New studies in teaching and learning continue to spring and with today's technology the young teacher has a great pool that can dive in, choose, adapt and apply in his classroom. This way, the lessons become more interesting for the learners who, in their turn, become more excited with the idea of another day at school. So, students are exposed to more modern methods of teaching under a fresh point of view and consequently they are more engaged in classroom but also at home. Another advantage of the inexperienced teacher is his increased level of patience and understanding. The new teacher has the energy and the will to listen to the students and address their needs but also their attitudes. Furthermore, the new teacher is ready to extend the, sometimes narrow, boundaries of the classroom providing students with more freedom to interact and with a greater understanding of the difference between his students' personalities. The dream for a novice teacher to transform his class into the class of his dreams, the ideal class, gives room for imagination to kick in, in his efforts to make this ideal class a reality.

But excitement is also a great drawback of the inexperienced teacher. Young teachers tend to get too friendly with their students and sometimes this conveys wrong messages to the latter group resulting to inadequate behaviour towards the teacher and to others in school as well. According to modern pedagogy, maintaining a good and healthy relationship with the students can be beneficial to their psychology and process of learning. On the other hand, the realisation of proper manners that society dictates is something to be taught and experienced by students who later on are going to become active members of this society. There is a fine line that the teacher must balance on; a task which most times poses trouble to the inexperienced teacher. However, balancing on this fine line comes natural to the experienced teacher. Furthermore, the relaxed atmosphere caused by this overly friendly environment is bound to act as a disincentive to the majority of

the class in terms of paying attention and trying to achieve academic goals. The latter is related to yet another drawback; the fact that the new teacher lacks the experience of classroom management. Whether it is the friendly relationship that the teacher cultivates or the lack of prior knowledge, the new teacher will most probably make mistakes in his effort to prevent and to handle disruptive behaviour. Last but not least, the inexperienced teacher suddenly has to juggle his students' different needs, backgrounds, abilities, feelings and attitudes and teach at the same time. In other words, an overwhelming situation in which he is prone to make mistakes and wrong decisions. It is common for new teachers to make wrong moves in terms of analysing situations that come up in class, such as health issues, learning abilities, psychological issues, communicating with parents and other.

On the other side, the experienced teacher is relieved from all the worries and problems that the new teacher faces. To begin with, the experienced teacher knows his way in the classroom. In other words, he knows how to stand, how to talk and how to address the children. He also knows how to organise his class, books, notebooks, charts, desks. He knows the best way to arrange the students' seating in order to be beneficial for each and every one of them. All in all, he knows all those practical secrets, details and tips that are so important to build a safe and constructive environment for the learners. In addition, after many years of teaching, the seasoned teacher has developed practical proven methods and small tricks that make his teaching effective and his lessons easy to follow and hence to understand. The experienced teacher seems to have a clearer idea of what works and what does not in terms of methods and activities. The classroom management is another aspect that comes natural to the experienced teacher. Obviously, not all cases of delinquent behaviour are the same, but in most cases the experienced teacher has developed techniques that prevent and solve problems like these. Also, in relation to everyday school life, the experienced teacher has formed schemata to deal with numerous of events, such as health issues or school management issues as well as the communication with the parents.

Experience, though, sometimes comes with a price. Experienced teachers find it hard to change their ways of teaching or to use more modern materials. They have developed fixed ways and ideas concerning all aspects of school life. Even though, most of the times such ways represent the essence of their experience, sometimes they may also contain outdated teaching methods, ideas and activities, as well as rigid notions on student-teacher relationships. What is more, their understanding and their empathy towards students is not as acute as it is with the younger and inexperienced teachers. Further, it is not uncommon for teachers who have been teaching for years to suffer from what is called a burn-out. In other words, they have grown tired and they



have lost their interest and will to teach. As a consequence, students lose their interest too and gain little from the teaching-learning process.

All in all, teaching may be considered as a complex craft that involves, among other, deep knowledge of the subject being taught and of the corresponding methodology in order to teach it effectively, understanding of pedagogical issues and ways, enthusiasm, a talent in engaging students of various abilities and backgrounds, high levels of emotional intelligence, and adaptability in handling the unexpected in the classroom as well as in absorbing new teaching ways and ideas. These characteristics can be found both in experienced and inexperienced teachers but most probably in different amounts. What is important for the inexperienced teachers is to listen, observe and learn from the seasoned teachers and, on the other hand, for the experienced teachers to absorb and share the excitement that the inexperienced teachers have and try to challenge their ways and ideas.

**Venetia Koiliari**

**The experienced vs. the inexperienced teacher:  
A comparative glance**

Being a new, not experienced perhaps, but certainly not inexperienced teacher, with only five years of service at the school I am working at, I realize that each school unit is comprised of a diversified professional team. Numerous factors distinguish each teacher: factors which, once accepted, adapted and combined to complement each other according to each professional's judgement, will present their students with quality education. In my view, it is to a great extent the quality of the educators that determines the quality of education which the school as an institution offers.

Experience is a trait which separates teachers into two promising groups. It should be noted that the term experience here is used to denote knowledge which is acquired through actual hands-on conditions and practice: that which is arrived at through a constant quest for something new and different, and not simply the experience of a passive and complacent teacher with many years of existence in the classroom. Thus, even a teacher with relatively few years of practice could be considered experienced while not negating the many years of experience of an older teacher. Moreover, in our days the diminishing importance of the stereotype of the older vs. the newer teacher has been observed.

Furthermore, there exist certain positive as well as negative features which identify the two different, but potentially complementary, groups of educators. Of course, this cannot be considered a rule as each teacher, whether old or new, is an individual with his/her own dynamism, personality and educational practices right from the start. It is an entirely personal option of each individual to classify him/herself as either experienced or not.

In general terms, the positive characteristics of an 'experienced/old' teacher include the ability to manage all requirements of school practice with more ease and mastery than the 'inexperienced/new' teacher. Due to his/her many years in the field the instances of contact with different types of students and parents, colleagues and conditions are more varied, and therefore, the mistakes of the past have become valuable knowledge for him/her. On the other hand, physical and mental strain may, at times, render him/her inadequate for the job. It becomes difficult for him/her to respond to the demands of a classroom of children and his/her thirst for creativity are diminished. In the meantime, his/her younger colleague is characterized by a drive for work and patience while he/she is closer to his/her students in terms of age. An older, more experienced teacher has cultivated and developed the ability to transmit knowledge, but may become trapped in set practices because he/she suffers from a fear of change. Older teachers contribute to the stability of a school and quite possibly may serve as mentors for younger teachers. Younger teachers on their part contribute ideas and enthusiasm.

At this point it should be emphasized, as it has already been stated in this article, that the older teacher is not necessarily the more 'experienced' one. His/her many years in the classroom should not always be equated to productivity. Besides, the experienced teacher's highest recommendation is not based on the fact that he/she is omniscient, but on the fact that due to his/her wide experience he/she is armed with the correct kind of knowledge for the job and is open to new experiences.

In conclusion, the mix of the various attributes of experienced and inexperienced teachers and the creation of cooperative, mutually supportive and helpful relationships between them, is the key to an effective and harmonious contemporary school environment which will prove attractive to students. These two interconnected links constitute the culture, the philosophy and the soul of each school.

**Elena Fourla**

<b>Analgesic paradigms for educational amnesty</b>
--

### **Pedagogy of Happiness’.**

The theme of the Symposium is focused on the ‘Pedagogy of Happiness’. This approach is related with the discussion for ‘another’, ‘unconventional’ school. In this framework the following themes are going to be examined: Historic - philosophical approaches and Methodological and Epistemological aspects of the ‘unconventional’ school. Also, the ‘conventional’ and the ‘unconventional’ school through time and the Alternative Schools/Alternative Practices- ‘Forbidden’ schools.

To this direction, special emphasis will be given to the Critical Pedagogy for the 21st century and the Humanistic Education/Human Values and Educational Crisis as well as to Teachers Education for a conventional and for an unconventional school, to the Educational Policies and Curricula and to some Schools around the World-Innovative Schools. The above –as main axes of the Convention- will be centered on essential issues of modern Pedagogy in the context of a school of joy and a Pedagogy of Happiness.

**Hellenic Education & Research Center (HERC)** is an organization dedicated to the promotion of Hellenic Studies with an emphasis on the Classics. Its mission is to foster academic study in Greece. HERC encourages undergraduate level university students and continuing education students to benefit academically and personally from a short term study abroad experience in the birthplace of Classical Civilization.

Hellenic Education & Research Center (HERC) is an organization dedicated to the promotion of Hellenic Studies with an emphasis on the Classics. Its mission is to foster academic study in Greece. HERC encourages undergraduate level university students and continuing education students to benefit academically and personally from a short term study abroad experience in the birthplace of Classical Civilization.

HERC also promotes and facilitates more advanced academic study. It encourages graduate students and faculty to visit Greece and pursue research oriented work in the field of the classics or related subjects.

Additionally, HERC seeks to increase the awareness and understanding of Greek History and Culture by organizing and participating in educational programs, seminars, conferences, lectures, documentary films, and publications.

**Combining mystery and rhetorical hordes**

### **High school students rejoice as ‘bank of exam topics’ is abolished**

The new ministry of education has decided to abolish the so-called “Bank of Topics” from secondary education, starting from the May-June 2015 examination period.

The “bank” required high schools to give 50 percent of marks from exam questions submitted by high school teachers around Greece from a pot-luck draw. The problem was that a number of said questions were not taught in all schools or their validity was not checked by education authorities. Furthermore, these grades counted from the first year of high school to the final year. The marks would be counted on the university entry exams.

A new circular sent by Deputy Education Minister Tasos Kourakis on Wednesday said that this system is to be abolished for the first and second years of high school. The results of exams of first and second year high school students will no longer count for university entry.

Henceforth, examination material from each course will be recommended by teachers and have the approval of the school director. The material must be made known to students at least five working days before the end of classes (usually two weeks before the study period prior to exams).

The general average of 9.5 out of 20 is to be given as a passing grade.

The introduction of the “Bank of Topics” had caused a great deal of stress to students as they were worried that they could be tested on material they were never taught. As a result, private tutoring establishments noted a sudden increase of students in their afternoon courses that would not otherwise have sought extra tutoring.

<b>Pedagogical analyses of diagnostic interest</b>
--

### **Postgraduate studies mania hits Greece**

A significantly increasing number of Greek students have signed up for postgraduate studies over the past five years – during which the country has been hit by the economic crisis – in an attempt to increase their skills and boost their chances in an increasingly tough jobs market.

According to Greek newspaper “Kathimerini,” some 50,000 Greeks have registered for a master’s degree or doctorate since 2009 with some 15,000 having secured a postgraduate certificate from a foreign university during that time.

In view of the high unemployment rate in Greece – it still remains above 25% after dipping from a record 28% in the fall of 2013 – many young Greeks appear keen to secure the grant that often accompanies a doctorate or master’s degree in order to make ends meet until a job opportunity presents itself. The majority of postgraduate students choose to specialize in sciences, followed by economic studies and information technology.

At the same time, academics have also shown an increased interest in postgraduate studies in an attempt to tap into the new trend, while securing their own positions in Greek universities. As “Kathimerini” stressed, the senate of one of the country’s largest institutions recently approved 20 new postgraduate programs.

According to VasoKinti of Athens Univeristy, the abundance of new postgraduate courses does not necessarily correlate to academic needs but to a need for additional revenue.

## **Bridging the metropolis of Hellenism with the Greeks in diaspora**

### **Winter hospitality plan for young Greeks abroad**

The Greek Deputy Foreign Minister, Kyriakos Gerontopoulos has decided to extend the summer hospitality programs for Greek children abroad to winter. His plan for a winter program will be implemented in the coming days by the General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad.

The hospitality program will be held from January 3 to 13, 2015, hosting 30 young Greek Diaspora members in Greece, after five years of inactivity. It will bring together Greeks from the countries of the Southern Hemisphere such as Australia and New Zealand, countries of Latin America and South Africa.

The program aims to strengthen the participants' national identity and their knowledge of modern Greece, as well as strengthening their ties with the homeland. The program includes visits to historical and archaeological sites and museums, a visit to the Presidential Mansion, the Parliament Building and Nafplio. There will also be lectures on Greek history and culture as well as lessons on Greek traditional dances and songs.

Referring to the fact that the program will be continued after a five year hiatus, Gerontopoulos said: "We are making our initial promises a reality. The hospitality program for Greek Diaspora children will not only resume, but it will be organized on a new basis. After the two summer programs were very successful, now we will be hosting young Greeks from abroad, aged 15-17 years from areas where schools are closed, in order for them to get to know their parents and grandparents' home."

## **Pseudonyms & sarcasms: Hypocrisy as exegesis**

### **Greek education: 22 Ministers in 40 years turn students into guinea pigs**

Since the restoration of democracy in 1974, Greek high school students have become guinea pigs as 22 different Education Ministers – two of them twice – have tried to implement reforms that would put their name in history rather than help students get in the higher education school of their choice.

There is something about the Education Ministry that makes Ministers come and go like temporary secretaries in a company. Given the fact that Greek Premiers give out offices and portfolios to MPs according to the votes they bring from their district, the Education Ministry has often fallen to the hands of people who have very little to do with education. Not very strange, considering Greece has been the country where a Defense Minister had never served in the army. But that's another story.

Unfortunately for Greek high school students who want to pursue university and post-graduate degrees, the entry exam system changes almost every two years and according to who sits on the Minister chair. It is not unusual for a student to start his university entry studies under one system and find a different system when exam time comes.

Greece's Education Ministers change every time there is a government reshuffle. They are a disposable species. Perhaps that explains the fact that they try to leave their mark while in office; try to force their name in Greek political history. And if they do, like Gerasimos Arsenis in the late 1990s, it will be painted in the darkest of colors. And no matter what they do, students will usually disagree with their programs. Then the government will change and they will disappear in the black political abyss.

The most recent example is the infamous decision to implement a pool of exam topics for entry exams. That was the idea of previous Education Minister Costas Arvanitopoulos in 2013. Current Minister Andreas Loverdos wants to change that. However, the 10th grade students gave exams 50%-based on material taken by the pool of topics. Their grade will be added to the final graduation grade when they give exams to enter universities.

Loverdos said that he received tons of letters opposing the topics pool as soon as he was appointed in office and that he will change it.

The system of entry exams in universities has changed ten times in the past 30 years. The first change came in 1983 under PASOK's Apostolos Kaklamanis



with five bundles of topics. George Papandreou brought another change in 1988. The only grades that counted were the exam grades, and high school grades were not taken into consideration.

In 1991, GiorgosSouflias changed the grading system using different grade coefficients. In 1996, technical high school graduates had to give extra exams to enter technical colleges. In 1998, the “Arsenis bill” brought riots and general school unrest that cost GerasimosArsenis his re-election. The bill wanted high school students to give general exams in 11th and 12th grade before entry exams.

In 2001, PetrosEfthimiou tried to correct the “Arsenis bill” and changed things again. Now 11th grade students would give exams on 9 lessons and 12th graders on 10 lessons. Marietta Giannakou (2004-2007) abolished 11th grade exams altogether and decreased the number of exam lessons to six for 12th graders. Gradewise, a 10 out of 20 was enough to enter a university. In 2010, Anna Diamantopoulou abolished the minimum grade needed (10) and 10,000 points were enough for university entry.

Last year, Costas Arvanitopoulos brought the topics pool and restored exams in 10th grade. Now Loverdos is working on a new reform that will change the “Arvanitopoulos bill” of 2013. The question is if he can make it before the snap elections.

Two Greek Prime Ministers have served as Education Ministers before leading the country. George Papandreou was appointed Education Minister twice (1988-89 and 1994-1996) and Costas Simitis (1989-90). Both are remembered for other things, and probably no one remembers they ever served the office of Education Minister.

## **An eclectic autopsy of authentic data at random**

### **The best public library in Greece**

The Veria Public Library in northern Greece is a model library that serves 61% of the city's population and shows what can be done when the staff love their jobs.

Aspasia Tasiopoulou, the library's public relations manager, says the Veria Public Library employs 21 people, has 30,000 members, lends 200,000 items per year, is part of Europeana and participates in all related EU programs. It adds continuously into its digital archives – now at 700,000 digital pages – while at the same time continuously tries to attract sponsors and donors. And this is extremely important since, as Tasiopoulou said, state funding barely covers the electricity bills alone.

What makes this library so successful is that it operates in order to serve people and cater to their 21st century needs. On a typical day, it is filled with people of all ages: Children playing with educational toys, others reading stories on computer screens, unemployed people creating their CVs or looking for job openings, young entrepreneurs learning how to use the internet to sell their products online, migrants looking for books in their language or chatting with their relatives online, pensioners trying to set up blogs, university students working on research projects.

The Veria Public Library lends more things than books and DVDs. Veria citizens can also borrow Kindle, music instruments, video camera, portable recording studio, 3D printer, Maker Space and more.

The current state of the Veria Public Library is the result of 25 years of work by previous director Yiannis Trochopoulos, who is now director of the National Library. The current director, Antonis Galitsios, continues in his steps.

Funded by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation "Future Library" program, the Veria library was modernized and expanded. Four years ago, it won the Bill and Melinda Gates Access to Learning Award (ATLA). The one-million-dollar award went to a new, 180 square-meter section on the first floor.

The "Future Library" project representative, Dimitris Protopsaltou, noted that very few young people were visiting the library in the past. It was a challenge, he said, but now the library attracts youngsters who in the past frequented internet cafes and bars.

## **Asynchronous metaphors of holistic authenticity**

### **Controversial artwork to be removed from 5th grade textbook**

The controversial artwork of a blender full of female naked bodies will be removed from a 5th grade textbook after media uproar and parent complaints.

The illustration is found on page 19 of a physics textbook under the section of mixtures and compounds along with other pictures. It depicts a blender full of naked young females in the process of grinding the bodies into a bloody pulp. According to parents and officials, the textbook with the particular illustration has been used since the 2005-2006 school year.

The Greece 's Ministry of Education has announced that the illustration in question will be removed from the digital version of the book and the textbook will be reprinted next year without it.

Controversy has taken media by storm with parents and journalists wondering who decided to put the questionable picture with violent and sexual tones in an elementary school textbook and why no Ministry of Education official ever noticed it.

The artwork belongs to 49-year old influential Japanese artist Aida Makoto. His multimedia works combine painting, video art, photography, sculpture and installations. He has also done illustrations for Manga comics. "Blender" is acrylic on canvas with dimensions 290X210.5 cm. It is on permanent exhibition at the Mizuma& One gallery in Tokyo and has also been exhibited at the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo. Some of his works have caused controversy for being too gory, too sexual.

## **Prosopography of a synchronous Hellenic pedagogue**

### **George Pasiás**

*Associate Professor of "Comparative Education and European Dimension in Education" School of Philosophy Faculty of Philosophy, Pedagogy, Psychology Department of Pedagogy Office: +30 210 7277 500, e-mail :[gpasias@ppp.uoa.gr](mailto:gpasias@ppp.uoa.gr)*

#### *A. Education.*

1985 : Diploma in Education, Pedagogical Academy of Mytilene, Greece. 1992 : B.A. in Education, Faculty of Primary Education, University of Aegean, Greece. 1994 : M.A. in Education, Faculty of Primary Education, University of Crete, Greece. 2001 : Ph.D in Education, Faculty of Primary Education, University of Athens, Greece.

#### *B. Professional work.*

He has worked as a primary school teacher (1985-1992). From 1996 to 2003 he worked as a member of the task force for the implementation of educational innovations and for European programmes in education at the Greek Pedagogical Institute. From 2004 to 2007 he served as an associate at the Department of Evaluation of the Pedagogical Institute. In 2007 he was elected as Assistant professor of "Comparative Education" at the Department of Special Education, University of Thessaly, Greece. From 2010 he is an Assistant professor at the University of Athens. From 2013 he is an Associate professor at the University of Athens. He teaches courses of Comparative Education, European Union Educational policy and European dimension in education both at the undergraduate and postgraduate level. He is the author of several books and articles in Greek and in English. Areas of research interest include: Comparative education, European educational policy, Tertiary education reforms, European citizenship, globalization in education. He is a member of the Comparative Education Society in Europe (CESE), of the Greek Comparative Education Society and of the Hellenic Pedagogical Society. Since 2009 he is vice-president of the Greek Comparative Education Society. He is a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the journal "European Education" (2011).

## **Laconic logos with diachronic pathos**

### **School teachers' job satisfaction and personal characteristics: A quantitative research study in Greece**

– The purpose of this paper (based on the relevant literature) is to: investigate, through empirical analysis, primary school teachers' perceptions regarding their job satisfaction, and examine whether or not the personal characteristics of primary school educators (such as gender, age, family status, educational level, and the total years of service in public primary education) have any impact on their job satisfaction.

– In total, 360 questionnaires were administered to primary school teachers in the metropolitan area of Athens (region of Attiki). The sample was randomly selected. The questionnaire was based on 41 closed and was divided into two sections. The Job Satisfaction Survey developed by Spector (1985) was implemented.

– Greek school teachers are generally satisfied with their profession. There is no statistical correlation between personal characteristics and the overall satisfaction while indicated that teachers are more satisfied with three aspects (subscales) of job satisfaction, namely, "administration," "colleagues" and "nature of work" and less satisfied with "salary," "benefits" and "potential rewards." Age correlates with the levels of satisfaction with reference to administration, potential rewards, colleagues and the nature of work. The overall satisfaction positively correlates with all nine aspects of job satisfaction (subscales) and gender affects the aspects of "promotion" and "colleagues."

**Anna Saiti & Yiannis Papadopoulos** (in: *International Journal of Educational Management*)

---

### **Open source 3D printing as a means of learning: An educational experiment in two high schools in Greece**

This research project attempts to examine to what extent the technological capabilities of open source 3D printing could serve as a means of learning and communication. The learning theory of constructionism is used as a theoretical framework in creating an experimental educational scenario focused on 3D design and printing. In this paper, we document our experience and discuss our findings from a three-month project run in two high schools in Ioannina, Greece. 33 students were tasked to collaboratively design and produce, with the aid of an open source 3D printer and a 3D design platform, creative artifacts. Most of these artifacts carry messages in the Braille language. Our next goal, which defined this project's context, is to send the products to blind children inaugurating a novel way of communication and collaboration amongst blind and non-blind students. Our experience, so far, is positive arguing that 3D printing and design can electrify various literacies and creative capacities of children in accordance with the spirit of the interconnected, information-based world.

**Vasilis Kostakis**<sup>1</sup>**Vasilis Niaros, Christos Giotitsas**(in: Telematics and Informatics Vol. 32, Issue 1, February 2015, Pages 118–128)

---

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Using action research in curriculum development in a fully-controlled educational context: The case of Greece**

The main aim of this paper is to illustrate the process through which curriculum development utilizing critical action research can contribute in the democratization in education. So it focuses on the potential of the interaction between teachers and students through developing cooperative and participatory practices in the context of conducting action research. All the specific examples presented in this paper are derived from the Greek educational system which is fully-controlled and highly-centralised. This choice makes the argument presented in the paper stronger: even in our times when in most western countries the neo-liberal policies in education are dominant and impose homogenisation, centralisation, austere accountability, and the disempowerment of teachers, there is still room for freedom, where teachers and students can interact, reflect and judge in the classroom, where the real curriculum can be developed. And –as we try to show in the paper- critical action research can suggest interesting processes in this prospect.

**EleniKatsarou&VassilisTsafos**(in: European Journal of Curriculum Studies Vol 1, No 2 (2014))

---

### **Coping with the crisis: Academic work and changes in Greek higher education**

Reforms over the last decade were an effort by the state to regulate the quality and effectiveness of Greek public universities. Concurrent with the introduction of these reforms, the austere economic crisis and the current political unrest in Greece are perceived to affect academic work. The objective of this chapter is to present changes in academic work in Greece, as derived from the laws, and discuss challenges that academics face resulting from higher education laws and the economic crisis. The data consists of documents and interviews with academics from 16 disciplines in one large university (N = 23). Under such changing circumstances, this small study shows that academics, especially those with more than 25 years of work at this university, work hard to keep the university open and help students to complete their degree.

**Antigoni Papadimitriou**(in: The Relevance of Academic Work in Comparative Perspective. The Changing Academy – The Changing Academic Profession in International Comparative Perspective, Vol. 13,2015, pp 41-57)

---

### **Secondary School Students' Perceptions of Their Counselling Needs in an Era of Global Financial Crisis: An Exploratory Study in Greece**

The aim of this study was to examine the counselling needs of a sample of secondary school students in Greece. Moreover, the effect of age, gender, and academic performance on such perceived counselling needs was also investigated. The sample consisted of 931 students (433 girls and 498 boys) aged between 12 and 16 years old. A 70-item questionnaire was developed and administered to assess participants' perceived needs in various areas. The exploratory factor analysis yielded five factors:

learning skills, vocational guidance/development, interpersonal relationships, personal development, and social values. Students particularly valued social values, learning skills, and vocational/guidance development compared to interpersonal relationship, and personal-development needs. In addition, the effects of age, gender, and academic performance on the five factors were all significant, suggesting that these variables were determinants of students' self-reported counselling needs. The implications of these results for the development and implementation of effective school counselling programs are discussed.

**Andreas Brouzos, Stephanos Vassilopoulos, AndronikiKorfiati, VasilikiBaourda**(In: International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, February 2015)

---

### **The Effect of Divorce on School Performance and Behavior in Preschool Children in Greece: An Empirical Study of Teachers' View**

According to the National Statistical Service of Greece, single-parent families, which emerged after divorce, in 2011 occupied an important place among other family types, endangering a large number of children to display behavioral problems and poor school performance. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effects of divorce on preschool children. Specifically, we studied the behavior problems and academic performance of children from single-parent families compared with children from nuclear families according to teachers' views. The research sample consisted of 314 students from various urban and suburban parts of Greece, for which their 118 preschool teachers completed the "Pupil Behavior Rating Scale" (PBRS) and a questionnaire with demographic characteristics and data of themselves, their students and their students' parents. The results of the research showed statistically significant correlations between 1) the type of family and occurrence of behavioral problems and 2) the type of family and school performance of the two student groups (single parenthood-nuclear). According to the findings of the present study, it appears that the family pattern affects the emotional development and school progress of children. For this reason, bearing always in mind that each family is unique, they are of particular importance: the assurance of a structured family environment (quality relationships of the members), the regular communication with parents built upon relationships of respect and trust, and finally, the social support and assistance of competent institutions to single-parent families.

**Babalís, T., Tsoi, K., Nikolopoulos, V. & Maniatis, P.**(In: *Psychology*, 5, 2014, 20-26)

---